

Simulacra in women's *majelis taklim* based on Jean Baudrillard's perspective

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Abstract This research aimed to discover the meaning of the *Majelis Taklim* for upper-middle-class worshipers and how simulacra-simulation and hyperreality processes occur in the *Salafi Majelis Taklim*. This research was a qualitative descriptive study which explored data through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The data was analysed by Miles and Huberman's analysis through three related sub-processes, namely data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Jean Baudrillard's simulation-simulacra theory was used as the primary research framework. The results of data analysis revealed that (1) *Majelis Taklim* became a mean of *hijrah* for the members. The *hijrah* referred here is the conversion from non-Salafi to a Salafi movement. It is an ideology that Muslims must return to the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Apostles to become more religious, increase social piety, and stay away from restrictions (usury, photos, polytheistic acts, etc.). (2) With media's support, *Majelis Taklim* became a simulacrum for the simulation process, which ultimately led to hyperreality, especially signs consumption practices (fashion, worship groups). (3) Hyperreality occurred in religious life.

Keywords: *majelis taklim*; *hijrah*; simulacra-simulation-hyperreality; baudrillard

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INTRODUCTION

Current trends show that *Majelis Taklim* is widely organised in major cities. In Surabaya East Java Indonesia, many *Majelis Taklim* events are held in 'elite' communities and are followed by Muslim women (Muslimah) who, based on their appearance, appear to be from the 'middle class.' These phenomena revealed the significant interest of Indonesian Muslims to do *hijrah* that leads to more religious life (Lyansari, 2019). There are various reasons to join '*pengajian*' or Quran recitation activities in the *Majelis Taklim*. Joining *Majelis Taklim* is expected to change the meaning their life and culture as well as to become individuals who distance themselves from bad behaviour and to embrace more Islamic lifestyles (Gawad et al., 2017; Braam, 2017; Fajriani and Sugandi, 2019). For the general community, the presence of *Majelis Taklim* may be beneficial because it can increase religious knowledge and beliefs that encourage improvements in community's religious practices, as a mean of friendship among the members, as well as promote awareness and welfare for worshipers and surrounding communities. Currently, the Quran recitation by *Majelis Taklim* has become a necessity for the community, both in rural and urban areas, whether organised by individuals, institutions, or certain groups (El-Menouar, 2014; Koenig et al., 2015; Elbasani, 2016; Chaplin, 2018a).

Middle-class Muslims in Surabaya are interesting to study because the middle class can be a hub for the construction of identity as philanthropy in society. The Muslim middle class was founded on the principle of *al-maslah ah al-ammah* (Gökarıksel & Secor, 2010; Jones, 2007). An interesting study revealed that there were women or mothers than men or fathers as member *Majelis Taklim* which was strengthened by data collected from the Ministry of Religion in 2019:

Table 1. Member of *Majelis Taklim*

Gender	Total member	Percentage
Men	4,002,434	41.4%
Women	5,667,838	58.6%
Total	9,670,272	100%

Source: kemenag.go.id, 2019

Therefore, *Majelis Taklim* is often associated with women. In consequence, the current function of the *Majelis Taklim* also is transforming, including being an institution for women 'empowerment' as well as improving religious life (Brigaitis 2005; Winn, 2012; Abaza, 2004; dan Geilsdorf and Menzfeld, 2017). More specifically, researches by Gawad et al., (2017); Braam, (2017); Tolsma (2008); Koenig et al., (2015); Fajriani and Sugandi, (2019), revealed that the purpose of *Majelis Taklim* has shifted from mere religious education institution to a facility for women to develop their roles in the public sector, especially in the religious and social aspects.

The phenomenon regarding the importance of images in Quran recitation activities began from the developments of gathering

activities which resulted in the shift of activity into hyperreality. This phenomenon is in line with research conducted by Rachmawati, (2015) and Astuti (2015), which revealed that the current Quran recitation activities have begun to shift from self-actualisation to hyperreality. Jean Baudrillard's theory identified this phenomenon as 'simulacra,' where reality has been replaced by a simulation of reality, represented by symbols and signs. Simulacra has been used as a way to meet the consumer community's need for signs. Because the society has been flooded with available images and information, the simulation has made image to be the most desirable and considered commodity in postmodern society's culture (Piliang, 2010). Alam et al., (2011) and Rofhani, (2017), argued that consumerism is also prevalent in the Quran recitation activities carried out primarily by middle-class women. They tend to be rational in perceiving religion and prefer a more 'educated' religious material, especially to deepen their religious knowledge.

Rofhani (2017) conducted similar research on Muslim middle class in relation to Muslim fashion. Similar phenomena also occurred in Germany (Damir-Geilsdorf and Menzfeld, 2017); Koenig et al., (2015). All studies concluded that *hijab* practices among urban Indonesian Muslims are not only part of personal religious identity, but is also a symbol of modern Indonesian urban Muslim society. Many urban Muslim women proudly wear *hijab*, which Brouwer, (2004) and Hassim, (2014)) concluded to have started with students and middle-class Indonesians. Fajriani and Sugandi, (2019); Chaplin, (2018); and Rofhani, (2017), revealed that in relation to religious movements, women tend to be more active than men. It prompted the emergence of 'elite' women's Quran recitation groups. If we look closely at this phenomenon, today, 'elite' women's recitation groups are increasing in Surabaya. They are organised by individuals or groups according to their affiliates, for example, those conducted by the Salafi (Chaplin, 2018a) even though they are considered a minority group (Miichi, 2019).

This research employed the relevant Baudrillard theories, such as consumption, simulacra, simulation, and hyperreality, to explore and analyse the simulacra problem in *Majelis Taklim* Surabaya. Baudrillard used the term 'simulation' to explain and support her main ideas: the simulation world is a world formed by various random sign and code relations without explicit references. This relationship involves 'real' signs (facts) as well as 'pseudo' signs (images) formed through reproduction processes. Baudrillard used simulation to explain the relations of production, communication and consumption in western societies characterised by overproduction, and over communication channelled through mass media, advertising, fashion, supermarkets, the entertainment industry, spiritual tourism and so on. Meanwhile, the simulacrum is a space where a simulation occurs or an imitation where the simulation is more real than the simulation itself. Simulacra is not

interchangeable with reality, but it is continuously exchanging with itself in an unbroken circle that does not need a reference. According to Baudrillard, simulations implicitly refer to the space and experience of the whole life in the world of simulation in the latest western capitalism or post-industrial societies consumer. Hyperreality is the result or effect of simulation. While simulation is a mental process or strategy, hyperreality is a concept several postmodern thoughts refers as 'more real than real' which construct reality in the world. The process of objects reproduction in society is seen to have produced artificial realities (Baudrillard, 1976; Baudrillard, 1983; Akhavan et al., 2018; Astuti, 2015; Rachmawati, 2015)

Various similar researches have been conducted on *Majelis Taklim* by Rofhani, (2017); Winn, (2012); Abaza, (2014); Sophia, (2014); Astuti, (2015); Rachmawati, (2015). Meanwhile, Rofhani, (2017); Hamdanah, (2018); Fajriani and Sugandi, (2019), have conducted researches on simulacra-simulations. However, there has been no Indonesian research on Simulacra at the *Majelis Taklim* from Jean Baudrillard perspectives. Therefore, this article contributed to the study of simulacra-simulations in *Majelis Taklim*, especially the Salafi group attended by upper-middle-class women. This research also contributed to the novelty of Jean Baudrillard's theory used to analyse *Majelis Taklim*.

METHODOLOGY

This research was qualitative. Qualitative research explains how researchers capture the meaning of activities and study these activities from various perspectives (Neuman, 2003). The research was focused on Surabaya City because it is the second-largest city in Indonesia. The city is also considered a religious city with a growing Muslim population. Muslims in Surabaya amounted to 2,393,070 or 87% of the total population of 2,765,487 (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2010). In 2013, the number increased to 2,670,989 or 91% of the total population of 2,915,442 (jatim.kemenag.go.id, 2013). Consequently, the number of *Majelis Taklim* in Surabaya continues to increase, making it ranks first in the number of *Majelis Taklim* in East Java.

The data of the study were collected primarily through in-depth and open interviews as well as participant observation conducted from early October 2019 until end of January 2020. The members of *Majelis Taklim* JN Surabaya could be considered diverse based on (1) age; (2) appearance - primarily Muslim fashion; and (3) management positions. In terms of age, members ranged from 23 years old to 68 years old.

Table 2. Age Distribution of *Majelis Taklim* JN

Age	Percentage
25 – 35 year	10%
35 – 50 year	60%
50 – 60 year	10%
60 year and up	20%
Total	100%

Source: Director of *Majelis Taklim* JN Surabaya (2020)

It is worth noting that the age group was not based on real data of the members but based on the statement from 'core management,' or those who have joined the *Majelis Taklim* JN Surabaya from the beginning. Therefore, the data was assumed to be accurate. The members' appearance could be categorised based on the type of Muslim clothing worn. We grouped them into two categories: those who wear Muslim clothing Islamic without hijab and those with hijab. Based on the management position, there were 'core management' and regular members.

The categorisations of the members were the basis from which researches determined the informants for each of these groups. The number of each group was not determined, but sampling was done using the snowball sampling technique. That is, when the data collected is sufficient and reaches a point where there is no additional new data, the interview is concluded.

From the results of the grouping, researches obtained the following informants: 5 core administrators, 23 regular members, 2 Islamic teachers (*Ustaz*), and 1 observer or lecturer which make up a total of 31 informants. To further support the acquisition of research data, researchers conducted a documentation study. Therefore, the perspective and nature of the data made this study a qualitative study. The analysis technique was divided into three components, namely data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification, as stated by Miles dan Huberman, (2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Majelis Taklim* as a tool for *hijrah

Today, the meaning of *hijrah* has developed and become more diverse. It is no longer seen as a reflection of the history Prophet Muhammad's migration from Mecca to Medina to save Islamic *da'wa* from the attacks of the Quraysh infidels. Today, *hijrah* emphasis the migration of a life that was far from Allah SWT to become a life that is close to Allah SWT. *Hijrah* covers all life aspects, including the heart, mind, behaviour, practices, and appearance. *Hijrah* is only intended to Allah; the intention of doing must be because of Him, not because of others (humans/things). This movement is believed to make one become individual who obeys Allah. The essence of *hijrah* is a *hijrah* of faith and the growth of good in oneself, that is, migrating from immoral activities towards obedience to the commands of Allah (Bhatt, 2014; Damir-Geilsdorf & Menzfeld, 2017; Dewi, 2017; Chaplin, 2018).

Essentially, *hijrah* means 'leaving' and 'changing to be better' which can be done individually or collectively. Literally, '*Hijrah*' means an act of moving places because of the want for a better life and avoiding disturbances and threats. *Hijrah* has certain connotations, including lifestyle changes marked by leaving things prohibited by Sharia teaching and followed by positive changes in spiritual attitudes (Akhavan et al., 2018; Elbasani, 2016; Damir-Geilsdorf et al., 2019).

What initially triggered the awareness of *Hijrah* among the members of the *Majelis Taklim* JN was information gained from the media, YouTube, among others. They either downloaded YouTube video themselves or received it through WhatsApp groups. The spread of such an ideology is to form a complete Muslim identity. Media propaganda is an innovation in the spread of Islam. Karim & Hasan; (2007); Hassim (2014) and Bhatt, (2014), reported that the media enabled the *Ustaz* to disseminate their *da'wa* and at the same time made it easier for the *mad'u* (receivers of *da'wa*) to access material despite time and location. The use of the internet as *da'wa* media is both an opportunity and a challenge. Muslims must be able to master and take advantage of developments in information technology, encouraged by some of the other worshipers who were initially introduced through the media. The position of YouTube as entertainment media has now shifted into a medium for Islamic *da'wa* content that guides members to *hijrah*.

The current study conducted in *Majelis Taklim* JN also found that *hijrah* was interpreted as a step towards changing and placing individuals who are experiencing Islamic *hijrah* towards a better-directed purpose of life. This step was taken by doing various activities such as joining Islamic religious studies, dressing according to *Sharia* law, following Islamic attitudes, and so on. *Hijrah* inspires members to conduct more meaningful lives, only hope for the blessing of God Almighty, and hoping for eternal life in heaven. For worshipers in *Majelis Taklim* JN Surabaya, people who are undergoing *hijrah* are given sustenance in their activities, forgiveness of all mistakes, their degrees are exalted by God, guaranteed to go to heaven, obtains victories, and the full blessings from God. Miichi (2019) argues that *Majelis Taklim* is closely related to contemporary politics. However, the same cannot be said for *Majelis Taklim* JN. *Majelis Taklim* JN closely guards the values of Islam that emphasise the vertical relationship with God and horizontal relations with fellow humans.

Hijrah as an ideology, values, and beliefs of *Majelis Taklim* JN was also supported by Brigaitis' research (2005) which stated Quran recitation activities or *Majelis Taklim* is a social capital in understanding Islamic and local communities' values where they are used to interpret Islamic values with fairness as the underlying premise in Islamic education. Thus, a more just system could be established. In principle, Islamic teachings are believed to be a source of inspiration for its followers' view of the world and the afterlife.

Members in *Majelis Taklim* JN Surabaya exhibited a change of behaviour in accordance with the promised ideals, which in the process, change into identity construction. According to Baudrillard (1983), identity construction is labelling of oneself primarily associated with the reflection of the environment or groups. In the world of simulation, a person's identity is no longer determined by oneself and from within. Instead, identity is more determined by the construction of signs, images and codes that form a mirror of how an individual understands themselves and their relationships with others. Furthermore, the construction of identity will also be influenced by economics, political, social and cultural factors, all of which are governed by the logic of this simulation in which codes and models determine how one must act and perceive the environment.

Furthermore, *Majelis Taklim* JN is a *Salafi Sunnah* Study Institution. Therefore, the use of *Shari hijab* an identity that is uniquely theirs. When members happen to wear conservative Muslim clothing such as a long blouse or robe and long pants and hijab covering the chest area, they are considered an 'alien' and are often identified as new people. Usually, members who wear such outfits would be questioned by others who are sitting nearby. The *hijab worn by the members*, besides being fashionable, was also expensive. Some of the brands that are often spotted in their activities include "Si-se-sa," "by Oky," "Jawhara Syar'i," and other brands. Some even wore Dian Pelangi's designer pieces which might be priced more than IDR 1 million or SGD 100. In line with the results of research conducted by Gökarıksel & Secor, (2010); Jones, (2007) explains that the function of clothing is to increase value. Muslim fashion and clothing are two opposites, but in reality, women can change the concept and brand them as a 'new way.' Both are considered very important, besides the decision to wear the hijab. That is why Muslim women's clothing is quite an attractive industrial commodity.

Based on Baudrillard's view (1983), fashion is one of the best ways by which capitalism exhibit cultural inequality and social discrimination. As Wilson pointed out, capitalism serves as a mask of the permanent nature of domination under capitalism. Hassim, (2014); Elbasani, (2016) dan Chaplin, (2018) supported the opinion that *hijab* fashion is related to modernity, self-identity, and social class. As a commodity, *hijab* is not merely the implementation of obedience but contains codes and signs of a social class.

The facts show that fashion behaviour forms one's identity, as observed in *Majelis Taklim* JN Surabaya. The fashion was in the form of bags, *hijab* and Islamic dress identified as a construct of self that must be owned by every member of the group. Consumption is a style of thinking and acting by humans in interpreting the needs and as adjustments to the environment around them. The problem that may arise after the articulation of the meaning of consumption itself is the

ideological construction and practice of each individual or society group.

According to McGuigan, cultural populism is an intellectual assumption made by several popular culture students that people's experiences and symbolic practices are more analytically or politically relevant than the culture. Ironically, populism represents a reflection of elitism, and as such, shows critical failures. Fundamentally, populism is an exaggerated reaction to the elitism theories of popular culture. Another problem is how populism provides an adequate explanation of consumption by including it in theoretical debates on popular culture. There is already a tendency in a series of critical feedbacks arguing that populism is equal to consumption. Thus, any attempt to understand the role of consumption in determining forms of popular culture began to be considered as another example of populism and was therefore omitted. The public consumes forms of popular culture. The reasons for consumption and the difficulty in predicting the exact pattern make consumption of popular culture a critical issue both theoretically and empirically (Strinati, 2010; Koenig et al., 2015).

In its development, *Majelis Taklim* JN Surabaya was found to have utilised social media and information technology to keep up with the needs of the members. Social media has several functions in *Majelis Taklim* JN Surabaya. Among which was the need of the members to communicate outside the time of Quran recitation activities as well as other needs. To accommodate these interests, WhatsApp groups for the members called "M.T. JN" were created. There were four WhatsApp groups called MT JN 1 to MT JN 4. Other than WhatsApp groups, the members also communicate and disseminate their teaching through YouTube. To expand their preaching mission through YouTube, the management board of *Majelis Taklim* JN Surabaya first handed out information (schedules and such) on various activities, including the Quran recitation activities, through their WhatsApp. From the WhatsApp group, information containing the discussion theme for the meetings, the name of the speaker or cleric, and places or YouTube or Facebook streaming links were disseminated through flyers.

The themes discussed were mostly current issues, including the Coronavirus. The poster or flyer mentioned that in addition to YouTube, *Majelis Taklim* JN Surabaya also utilised Facebook and Telegram for *Da'wa* purposes. Other than an interesting and up to date theme, the messages conveyed by the Ustaz during their meetings were memorialised in quotes to remind the members (in particular) of the activities' results and to provide a religious point of view regarding the Coronavirus to the general public.

Besides making quotes out of the materials preached by the Ustaz to as a reminder of the teachings and studies, the *Majelis Taklim* JN Surabaya also owns a Facebook fan page to capture materials that need extra attention and beneficial for members' lives and the general

society. The Facebook fan page is also commonly used for online studies through streaming to reach inferential coverage.

After further study, the fan page is a collection of *as-sunnah* studies, where the *Majelis Taklim* JN Surabaya is the most significant contributor to the study in terms of video study material. Therefore, it can be interpreted that the *da'wa* strategy that is currently developing rapidly through online media (WA, Facebook, and telegram) has become a tool for members of *Majelis Taklim* JN Surabaya or outside communities in the *hijrah* process. Social media is the right tool and strategy in building *da'wa* networks. One of them is to develop the *da'wa* network to take advantage of the development of global connections. This system is one alternative media for *da'wa*. The advantages that can be obtained by utilising the internet network, among others, strengthen the fabric of brotherhood, provide information in a short time (social aspects), become an arena of discussion about the development of Islam (religious aspects), and develop Science and Technology (aspects of science).

Researches by Hosseini et al., (2014); Bhatt (2014); Astuti (2015); Rachmawati (2015), explained that the use of social networking media for propaganda media does not mean leaving conventional media that has been passed down from generation to generation. Conventional media is still used, but *Majelis Taklim* and preachers have to move forward and take advantage of social media that are the current trend as a medium to convey *da'wa*. The *Majelis Taklim* and preachers should not be technologically illiterate. They must be able to adapt to the technology, including social networking media. Abaza, (2014) and Zulfikar, (2017) also explained that social media as a means of *da'wa* provides or shares information in the form of advice, knowledge, aphorisms, verses of the Qur'an and its interpretations, video lectures and everything related to Islamic *da'wa*. Obtaining information regarding Islamic *da'wa* is expected to be insightful, increase knowledge, raise one's awareness and eventually help one to behave accordingly.

The presence of simulations is not without process. There are several other stages of manipulation of reality in accordance with the changing times. The place where the process is manipulated is called simulacra. According to Jean Baudrillard, there are three levels of simulacra, counterfeit, production, and the simulation stage (simulation). *Counterfeit* is a period where reality is still original, and the sign does not precede reality. This is still seen as a harmonious and optimistic reality because false and true reality can still be identified. The imitation process, where the form of reality into other media, can also be clearly distinguished through simple thinking. For example, one can distinguish between the actual reality between a mountain painting that resembles the actual and the mountain itself. The counterfeit stage lasted from the Renaissance to the industrial reformation era. In the counterfeit stage, signs began to appear during

the industrial reformation era—one of the biggest influences in fashion. In the past, fashion was not recognised because all classes could access it, but since the bourgeoisie began practising fashion signs, it began to spread to the public. Signs that are present today are considered to be emancipatory in the social order (Baudrillard, 1976; Baudrillard, 1983; Noor, 2015; Sari & Riso, 2017; Pisani & Buehler, 2017).

Simulacra-Simulations and Hyperreality Space

The role of an Ustaz is the key to success in religious understanding in the *Majelis Taklim* JN. The Ustaz at the *Majelis Taklim* of JN Surabaya was believed as an intelligent, broad-minded, IT literate and pleasant personality. He conveyed his messages in an enjoyable and calming way. This is consistent with the Salafi's view on Ustaz: they are considered to be the backrest of the people, a place to ask for advice and guidance. If there were no Ustaz, humans would have fools as role models. They might have seemed to be devoted, but no knowledge and nor proper understanding.

Ustaz conveyed his message with firm gestures, pleasant facial expressions. This affected the psychological condition of pilgrims. More profound observations revealed that the *Ustaz* was also more inclined to explore the emotional, irrational, mystical, and magical dimensions of the past spirits of the worshipers in the *Majelis Taklim* JN Surabaya. This message also influenced the religious ideology of the members. The messages delivered by the cleric was full of peace, the voice of the cleric was good, so the message conveyed made members feel comfortable and always want to take part in the study at *Majelis Taklim* JN Surabaya. This feeling of always wanting to be involved because of the authority and figure of the cleric. *Ustaz* at the *Majelis Taklim* JN had proper and straightforward communication techniques in delivering messages during the study. Based on observations of study activities at the *Majelis Taklim* JN Surabaya, the authors considered that the delivery of the material was persuasive. That is, *Ustaz* influenced the opinions, attitudes and actions of members by psychological manipulations so that the study participants or pilgrims act on their own free will without any coercion from outside.

Piliang, in his book entitled "*The Folded World*," argued that the methods of delivery are classified as psychical time-space condensation. The folding of space-time, compaction of action, miniaturisation of the world, and compression of symbols have direct or indirect effects on the supernatural world. They were summarising distance-time that did not change perceptions of far/near, fast/slow, which is now undergoing a fundamental change. The far one can now be felt as close, and the past can now be felt in the present. Conversely, those who are close can now become psychologically distant. Likewise, with the summation of the world into the form of

reality, media can change the human view of real/fantasy, original/copy, reality/simulation.

Based on the Baudrillard space theory, the reality that had been built by the *Majelis Taklim* was considered to be in the simulacra space. Simulacra is a real space that is full of reduplication and recycling processes of different aspects of life in the same dimension of space and time. According to Piliang, in this simulacra space, one can no longer be recognised the original and false, what is the result, what is the production, what is the subject, and what is the object. This simulacra space allows one to explore real and pseudo-real-time dimensions, produce, engineer, simulate everything to the furthest limits.

Eventually, the principles of reality itself have been surpassed, and replaced by substitutions, created artificially through the help of cutting-edge science, technology and art, and have replaced conventional assumptions. Such conditions are called conditions post reality. The discussion of the condition post reality cannot be separated from the various concepts and terminology that built it, such as simulacra, simulation, and hyperreality from (Baudrillard, 2000). Simulacra/simulacrum is not another word for simulation. Although all simulations are simulacra, not all simulacra/simulacrum are simulations. According to Baudrillard (2000), Simulation is the next development from the initial stage of simulacra. The first simulacra are explicitly limited to imitating, copying and duplicating as its model. In the era of simulation, reality has no existence. According to Baudrillard, reality has merged into one with a sign, the image of reproductive models is no longer possible to find a real reference, make a difference between representation and reality, image and reality, signs and ideas, and between pseudo and real, there is only mixed stir in everything.

Baudrillard, (2000) with the idea of simulation it can be seen that the effect of the level of public awareness is diminishing to what is 'real' due to the images presented by the media. Each individual will be mediated by what is referred to as Baudrillard as 'ecstasy of communication', 'living' on a computer screen and even being a part of it. According to Bell in an artificial space, the simulation process occurs due to the development of communication technology and new media can cause individuals to increasingly distance reality, creating a new world that is the virtual world.

Besides the primordial or ancient heritage of spirituality, the development of the latest technology - especially cyberspace technology, a new source of postmodernism spirituality. The development of cyberspace has paved the way for a redefinition of what is called spirit and spirituality. There is growing optimism among cybercasts, that information or digital electronics is nothing but a new form of spirit, replacing spirit as a term that is always associated with God.

Cyberspace technology, which is a new source of postmodernism spirituality, was also adopted by the *Majelis Taklim* JN in Surabaya. This technology is mainly used to deliver material, namely as a learning resource that provides some material for in recitation with worshipers. Materials are delivered through the use of technology such as social media and android-based applications. This technological postmodernism makes the pilgrims explore knowledge in cyberspace which replaces the spirit of the common attributes in the form of authentic experience (though not material) so that the understanding conveyed can be received ultimately, without controlling the visible world or meetings in the *Majelis Taklim* JN Surabaya.

One thing that was conceptualised by Baudrillard (1976) with simulacra which states that all systems, all existing things are nothing. There was nothing but a very big pretence, gigantic simulacrum. Not that it is not real, but only a simulation or pretence. Like a map made as an imitation of an area. Maps are made and used in such a way, considered to be the 'real' territory. Baudrillard saw that everything that happened was just like a map.

As a simulacrum, *majelis taklim*, which is famous for its social care or social services, *Majelis Taklim* JN can be seen as an event of religious development that can be understood if we understand the context. Context is everything that covers an event like the use of Arabic as a language that is familiar or entrenched in the group. Some people even explained that to use Arabic in communication is common in *majelis taklim*. Unconscious use of Arabic as the language of activity in the group is one form of the simulacra process that takes place in *majelis taklim*. Baudrillard writes about a world constructed from models or simulacra, which does not refer to or base on any 'reality,' other than itself.

Baudrillard found that the code age or simulacra began to enter social networks. One symptom is the collapse of opposing things, and everything becomes uncertain: the beautiful and the bad in fashion, left and right in politics, right and wrong in the media, useful and useless at the level of objects, nature and culture. In this age, all can be exchanged.

Related to the current media development, Heidegger explained that the world of media today is built by images. In his book "*The Age of the World Picture*", Heidegger saw that the proliferation of images around us, then the world in which we live eventually transformed into nothing more than image ontology. Humans are surrounded and surrounded by images (photos, magazines, television, films, computers, internet), and these images become a mirror where we look in the mirror, where we look for our existence. Now it is like television, computers, the internet has taken over the function of human vision, and shapes reality with its own language (Chaplin, 2018b).

The media, especially the mass media, is an essential cultural agent, the mechanism of work of the media has managed the facts into news that is indeed expected, the media not only presents reality, it also produces it. If the news is a fact plus meaning, then the media has turned the facts into facts with more substantial persuasion power to the public. They manipulate the image of this fact data material creatively into an image that is rich in message, enjoyment and meaning.

In the *Majelis Taklim*, both the way of *Ustadz* communication, the environment and the material conveyed made drifting of worshipers in abstract religious spaces formed in the analogy of God. In the book "*The Folded World*", Piliang explains that this state is included in the loss of consciousness which fuses with higher awareness, namely God's awareness. Worshipers often tell stories and cry when they remember the sinful behaviour that was committed, for example, the old profession at a conventional bank that operates on the concept of usury. Many members share anxiety about their past and cry when praying and worshipping. Pilgrims began to correct and pay for their mistakes in the past by doing social care through social service activities organised by the *Majelis Taklim* JN.

Majelis Taklim JN has disseminated member communication, study conclusions, and material content through cyberspace in the form of quotes or invitations for members and the wider community. Internal organisations (*majelis taklim* JN) that communicate in cyberspace have been able to create a global world community that is characterised by almost no boundaries and space for someone to communicate and connect, so that materially able to develop a new space for people's lives. Conscious or not humans have lived in 'two worlds' that is, first the real world community characterised by a life that can be tangibly felt where social relations between fellow humans are built and carried out in real terms through sensing, and people's lives can be witnessed as they are. Secondly, virtual society (cybercommunity), or community life in cyberspace is the life that cannot be directly sensed or observed but can be felt and witnessed as a new reality for individuals.

Initially, the virtual world and humans in cyberspace is a fantasy of human hyperreality about the values, images and meanings of human life as another form of a new life for humans in the hyperreality world. Life in the virtual world is almost similar to the real world as well as the form of communication because the virtual world is also the work of humans, so life also has social interaction, build culture, build power, authority and leadership, crime and even resistance.

Based on that, it can be concluded that the development of technology, especially social media (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) is a reality and historical record that has brought changes in the culture of the world community, especially changes in human communication. This communication process also has implications for

style human communication, specifically in *netizen* communication style on social media. The communication process that previously only conducted through face-to-face communication, group communication, mass communication, now has taken a tremendous change because of social media. Social media is media that is designed to spread messages through social interaction and is made with publication techniques that are very easily accessible and large-scale. The ability of electronic media enables designers of media setting agendas to create reality by using a production model that Jean Baudrillard calls a simulation, namely the creation of real models without origin or initial reality, this is what he calls Hyperreality (Piliang, 2003; Mahfud, 2013; Atwan, 2016; Shavit, 2014; Dewi, 2017; Pisani & Buehler, 2017).

We recognise the distance between empirical reality and dream reality which are bridged by the media. In line with Baudrillard's thinking about hyper-reality theory and simulation. This concept entirely refers to the conditions of virtual or artificial cultural reality in the era of various forms of simulation (depictions with imitation). The simulation is what imaged a reality that is not as real as reality. The reality that is 'not real' but imaged as a reality that determines consciousness is what is called pseudo-reality (hyper-reality). This reality appears through the media that become the 'centre' of the mass community. Hyperreality in the mass media is a result of the revolution of classical economic values and the development of symbolic exchanges that take place in line with significant changes in all aspects of life, including mass media. The revolution also made meaning disappear, and society became the silent majority. The revolution that has come to bear pure signs, without signs has caused mass media information only to produce and spread signs without meaning. Society as a mass media audience is 'forced' to consume these signs, without the process of screening and criticism. As a result, public awareness becomes dull, so that the community falls in the mass of the silent majority (Baudrillard, 1983; Baudrillard, 2000; Osborne, 2012 dan Perry, 2012).

Hyperreality is an artificial reality that mimics a reality that takes a model of an inevitable reality, but because of the process of manipulation, the artificial reality is disconnected from the actual reality, in line with research (Rachmawati, 2015; Astuti 2015; Dewi, 2017; Suprpto and Huda, 2018; Mawardi & Riza, 2019) which stated that hyperreality that develops through a simulation process follows the development or revolution in the law of values. The revolution resulted in what is currently only a symbolic exchange in which what remains is hyperreality, that is, symbolic signs are exchanged, and signs or their meanings are sought in the relation of these signs with other signs in the sign system.

The role of mass media in this process is enormous. Today's mass media is no longer a propagator of reality but has been transformed into a propagator of hyper-reality. The mass media can create a silent

consumer society thanks to its ability to manipulate reality into hyperreality. The mass media determine how humans view the world. The demands of the logic of global capitalism force television and the internet into a kind of drug that makes the masses passive. Social reality is engineered by a large number of messages and signs that are continuously being conveyed by the mass media. It cannot be denied that the role of the mass media in shaping people's behaviour and even shaping the world itself is vast. The mass media determines how we see the world. That role in the era of hyper-realistic information and communication is to create human unconsciousness. In the past, mass media was limited to controlling the audiences' awareness. Now, the mass media has even been able to create a world full of fantasy. In that world, there are only perfect ideas, dreams, fantasies and utopias. We are forced to enter and live in that world. In that world, even real events have a place (space-time) to take place.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study prove that the *Majelis Taklim JN* is a *majelis taklim* that functions as an institution for the study, education, empowerment, service, and improvement of women. The recitation was carried out in accordance with the study of the Sunnah (based on the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet) and guided by the clerics. Among *Majelis Taklim JN* members, the word '*hijrah*' often appears. The findings are mostly a form of a metaphysical experience that develops from religious experience and causes members to dream and feel religious fantasy.

The media's role is to create realities that are constructed and displayed in simulators and clustered into clusters of images that 'lead' members of the *Majelis Taklim* to the consciousness displayed by the simulators. This is what Baudrillard called an expectation in the simulacra-simulated space. Social reality is engineered by a large number of messages and signs that are consistently being conveyed by the mass media. The mass media determine how members of the *Majelis Taklim* view the world.

The material that is continually presented by the Taklim JN through the media creates hyper religiosity in the congregation. Pilgrims feel like a world full of fantasy as if the pilgrims can feel the good and evil, the despicable, the rewards of sin, the pleasure of heaven and the torments of hell. In addition, the results of the study explained that consumption of the sign occurs in fashion - mainly clothing and bags - worn by worshipers. The clothes worn are indeed Shari, according to the Sunnah. However, worshipers wear branded, beautiful and attractive Shari clothing. Thus, Muslim fashion becomes 'fashion.' Consumption of the sign is inevitable because the taklim assemblies continuously talk about the Shari, branded, and beautiful clothes through the appearance of the worshipers and the Instagram media of boutique owners who are members of the Taklim JN Board of

Directors. Based on Baudrillard's perspective, the consumption of the sign is a reflection of hyperreality.

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